

# **STOP** FORCED LABOR IN **VIETNAM'S** DETENTION CENTERS FOR DRUG USERS



- An estimated **309,000** people were detained in Vietnam's drug detention centers from 2000 to 2010. (Vietnamese Ministry of Labor)



- People held in drug centers have **NOT** been detained due to a conviction in a court of law.
- Detainees are forced to work in harsh conditions for **little or no pay**.

- Detainees are forced to stay in detention centers from **2 to 5 years**.

- Detainees are regularly **beaten** or held in an **isolation cell** for not filling daily work quotas.

- **33,000** individuals were detained in drug detention centers in 2010. (State Department Human Rights Report, 2010)



- Drug detention centers are a growing problem in Vietnam. The number of centers in Vietnam has grown from **67 to 123** from 2000 to 2010.

This form of forced labor violates international and domestic law.

## More Information on Vietnam's Forced Labor Centers

Vietnam's drug detention centers operate outside of the criminal justice system; rather, people are processed under administrative law. Detainees in drug detention centers never receive a hearing or trial before being committed. They may be committed by police officials, family members, or community focal points that keep lists of known drug users. Individuals can be committed to a detention center based on one urine test, and without a medical evaluation (UNODC Report on Vietnam, 2009).

Detainees are forced to work in harsh conditions and are required to fulfill a daily quota for their work. As a consequence for not filling quotas (which can often be extraordinarily high) or committing minor infractions, detainees are punished by being:

- Denied baths for a month;
- Denied food and other supplies;
- Beaten with clubs;
- Put in isolation for up to a week in a cramped cell;
- Forced to kneel on sharp stones.

Detainees are either underpaid or not paid at all for their labor. In many cases, the wages that they do earn are held by the centers for payments of electricity, medicine, or food.

Some of the forced labor tasks include:

- Shelling cashews;
- Garment manufacturing;
- Sewing mosquito nets;
- Knitting and tailoring;
- Livestock breeding and farming;
- Making false eyelashes;
- Painting plastic animals;
- Making soccer balls.

The Vietnamese government partners with private companies to use forced labor to produce goods for export, including Vietnam's second largest export to the United States: **cashews**.

More than **90%** of people who are held in detention centers for heroin use relapse after release.

Vietnamese law **prohibits** maltreatment of workers and all forms of forced labor and Vietnam has ratified **ILO Convention 29**, which prohibits "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily" (Global Standards, International Labor Organization).



**For more information, please visit  
the International Labor Rights Forum.  
[www.LaborRights.org/Vietnam](http://www.LaborRights.org/Vietnam)**